FD-350 (Rev. 7-16-63)

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Garrison Witness Tells Of Purported NBC Offers

NEW ORLEANS, La. (AP) — Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's presidential assassination investigation found itself in more controversy today after a star witness provided a denial to statements aired by the National Broadcasting Co.

Perry Russo told newsmen Tuesday members of an NBC news team sought his help "to wreck the Garrison investigation."

He said that the NBC team alternated promises and threats in repeated efforts to enlist his cooperation.

In New York, the network denied Russo's detailed accusations.

In its Monday night televised program NBC said Garrison placed Russo on the witness stand during the preliminary hearing for Clay L. Shaw knowing that the witness had failed a lie detector test revelant to his testimony.

"RUSSO'S ANSWERS to a series of questions indicate, in the language of the polygraph operator, 'deception criteria'", NBC said.

Leonard Gurvich, a private investigator who supervised the test, denied Russo flunked and said the polygraph operator was unable to get specific readings because Russo was "highly nervous."

Shaw, 54, a wealthy retired New Orleans businessman, has been indicted on charges of conspiracy to murder President John F. Kennedy who was assassinated in Dallas, Tex., Nov. 22, 1963. The indictment was based largely on Russo's grand jury testimony.

Russo, 25, a Baton Rouge insurance salesman, told the grand jury he attended a party in September 1963, at the home of David W. Ferrie. Russo said it was there he heard Shaw, Lee Harvey Oswald and Ferrie plot to kill the president.

THE WARREN Commission found no credible evidence that Oswald was aided in the assassination of Kennedy.

Ferrie and Oswald are dead. Shaw is free under $10,000 bond, awaiting trial.

Garrison appeared briefly at the start of Russo's news conference in his office.

Earlier, the prosecutor accused NBC of using "the big lie" in an attempt to wreck his investigation.

"I think that he could have been used much more effectively by the Justice Department," Garrison said. "But, of course, there is more experience there."

Russo told newsmen that Walter Sheridan of the NBC news staff had offered "to set me up in California, protect my job and guarantee Garrison would never get me extradited back to Louisiana" if he cooperated.

Russo said Sheridan made the promise if he would "side with NBC and the defense."

RUSSO IDENTIFIED two other persons he said had contacted him on behalf of NBC as Richard Townley of WDSU-TV, an NBC affiliate here and writer James Phelan of the Saturday Evening Post.

Russo said Townley threatened to wreck his personal reputation unless he cooperated.

In New York, an NBC spokesman said Townley had talked with Russo on several occasions, but "denied telling him he was working closely with the defense or threatening to ruin Russo's reputation."

The NBC spokesman said Russo expressed doubts to Townley, Sheridan and Phelan on separate occasions that his pretrial testimony was entirely true. He said Russo asked the NBC team "to find a way out" for him.

Russo said he was told by members of the NBC team that both the network and the Central Intelligence Agency were out to "wreck the Garrison investigation."

Garrison claims Kennedy was killed by anti-Castro Latin Americans who once worked for the CIA.

In Washington, the Federal Communications Commission said it had received a letter from Garrison charging NBC with trying to destroy his assassination probe and referred it to the commission's complaints and compliance division.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

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"The Dallas Times Herald" Dallas, Texas

Date: 6/21/67

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Title: Felix R. McKnight

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